UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN LECTURESHIP
IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

VIII

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

CHARLES FOSTER KENT, PH.D.

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LIST OF LECTURES DELIVERED UNDER THE GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN LECTURESHIP IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I. 1900
GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN, LL.D.
Founder of the Lectureship
"THE GOLDEN RULE"

II. 1906
OLIVER HUCKEL, A.B., A.M.
Poet and Author
"MODERN STUDY OF CONSCIENCE"

III. 1909
LYMAN ABBOTT, LL.D.
Editor of "The Outlook"
"THE ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS"

IV. 1914
HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE, LL.D.
Associate Editor of "The Outlook"
"ETHICS OF THE LARGER NEIGHBORHOOD"

V. 1915
DAVID STARR JORDAN, LL.D.
President of Leland Stanford University
"WORLD PEACE AND THE COLLEGE MAN"

VI. 1922
REV. JAMES MOFFATT, D.D., D.Litt.
Professor of Church History in the United Free Church College of Glasgow, Scotland
"JESUS ON LOVE TO GOD"
"JESUS ON LOVE TO MAN"

VII. 1924
REV. FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY, A.B., D.D., LL.D.
Emeritus Professor of Christian Morals, Harvard University
"THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST"
(*a*) "The Social Principles of the Teaching of Jesus"
(*b*) "The Social Consequences of the Teaching of Jesus"

VIII. 1925
CHARLES FOSTER KENT, Ph.D.
Woolsey Professor of Biblical Literature, Yale University
"THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIANITY"

The George Dana Boardman Lectureship
in Christian Ethics

(Founded Anno Domini 1899)

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIANITY

Lecture
delivered before the
University of Pennsylvania
April 2, 1925
in the Auditorium of the
University Museum

BY

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THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIANITY

I. The Quest for Fundamentals
II. The Fundamentalism of Jesus
III. Jesus' Fundamentals
IV. A Confession of Faith

11220

THE FOUNDATION

ON June 6, 1899, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania accepted from the Rev. George Dana Boardman, D.D., LL.D., and his wife a Deed of Gift, providing for a foundation to be known as "The Boardman Lectureship in Christian Ethics," the income of the fund to be expended solely for the purpose of the Trust. Dr. Boardman served the University for twenty-three years as Trustee, for a time as Chaplain, and often as Ethical Lecturer. After provision for refunding out of the said income any depreciation which might occur in the capital sum, the remainder is to be expended in procuring the delivery in each year at the University of Pennsylvania, of one or more lectures on Christian Ethics from the standpoint of the life, example and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the publication in book form of the said lecture or lectures within four months of the completion of their delivery. The volume in which they are printed shall always have in its forefront a printed statement of the history, the outline and terms of the Foundation.

On July 6, 1899, a Standing Committee on "The Boardman Lectureship in Christian Ethics" was constituted, to which shall be committed the nominations of the lecturers and the publication of the lectures in accordance with the Trust.

On February 6, 1900, on recommendation of this committee, the Rev. George Dana Boardman, D.D., LL.D., was appointed Lecturer on Christian Ethics on the Boardman Foundation for the current year.

THE OUTLINE

I. The Purpose

FIRST, the purpose is not to trace the history of the various ethical theories; this is already admirably done in our own noble University. Nor is it the purpose to teach theology, whether natural, Biblical, or ecclesiastical. But the purpose of this Lectureship is to teach *Christian Ethics;* that is to say, the practical application of the precepts and behavior of Jesus Christ to everyday life.

And this is the greatest of the sciences. It is a great thing to know astronomy; for it is the science of mighty orbs, stupendous distances, majestic adjustments in time and space. It is a great thing to know biology; for it is the science of living organisms—of starting, growth, health, movements, life itself. It is a great thing to know law; for it is the science of legislation, government, equity, civilization. It is a great thing to know philosophy; for it is the science of men and things. It is a great thing to know theology; for it is the science of God. But what

avails it to know everything in space from atom to star, everything in time from protoplasm to Deity, if we do not know how to manage ourselves amid the complex, delicate, ever-varying duties of daily life? What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world—the world geographical, commercial, political, intellectual, and after all lose his own soul? What can a University give in exchange for a Christlike character? Thus it is that ethics is the science of sciences. Very significant is the motto of our noble University—"*Literæ Sine Moribus Vanæ.*"

And Jesus of Nazareth is the supreme ethical authority. When we come to receive from him our final awards, he will not ask, "What was your theory of atoms? What did you think about evolution? What was your doctrine of atonement? What was your mode of baptism?" But he will ask, "What did you do with Me? Did you accept Me as your personal standard of character? Were you a practical everyday Christian?" Christian Ethics will be the judgment test.

In sum, the purpose of this Lectureship in Christian Ethics is to build up human character after the model of Jesus Christ's.

II. Range of the Lectureship

Secondly, the Range of the Lectureship. This range should be as wide as human society itself. The following is offered in way of general outline and suggestive hints, each hint being of course but a specific or technical illustration growing out of some vaster underlying Principle.

1. *Man's Heart-Nature.*—And, first, man's religious nature. For example: *Christian* (not merely ethical) precepts concerning man's capacity for religion; worship; communion; divineness; immortality; duty of religious observances; the Beatitudes; in brief, Manliness in Christ.

2. *Man's Mind-Nature.*—Secondly, man's intellect-nature. For example: *Christian* precepts concerning reason; imagination; invention; æsthetics; language, whether spoken, written, sung, builded, painted, chiseled, acted, etc.

3. *Man's Society-Nature.*—Thirdly, man's society-nature. For example:

(*a*) *Christian* precepts concerning the personal life; for instance: conscientiousness, honesty, truthfulness, charity, chastity, courage, independence, chivalry, patience, altruism, etc.

(*b*) *Christian* precepts concerning the family life; for instance: marriage; divorce; duties of

husbands, wives, parents, children, kindred, servants; place of women, etc.

(*c*) *Christian* precepts concerning the business life; for instance: rights of labor; rights of capital; right of pecuniary independence; living within means; life insurance; keeping morally accurate accounts; endorsing; borrowing; prompt liquidation; sacredness of trust-funds, personal and corporate; individual moral responsibility of directors and officers; trust-combinations; strikes; boycotting; limits of speculation; profiting by ambiguities; single tax; nationalization of property, etc.

(*d*) *Christian* precepts concerning the civic life; for instance: responsibilities of citizenship; elective franchise; obligations of office; class legislation; legal oaths; custom-house conscience; sumptuary laws; public institutions, whether educational, ameliorative, or reformatory; function of money; standard of money; public credit; civic reforms; caucuses, etc.

(*e*) *Christian* precepts concerning the international life; for instance: treaties; diplomacy; war; arbitration; disarmament; tariff; reciprocity; mankind, etc.

(*f*) *Christian* precepts concerning the eccle-

siastical life; for instance: sectarianism; comity in mission fields; co-operation; unification of Christendom, etc.

(*g*) *Christian* precepts concerning the academic life; for instance: literary and scientific ideals; professional standards of morality; function of the press; copyrights; obligations of scholarship, etc.

In sum, *Christian* precepts concerning the tremendous problems of sociology, present and future.

Not that all the lecturers must agree at every point; often there are genuine cases of conscience, or reasonable doubt, in which a good deal can be justly said on both sides. The supreme point is this: Whatever the topic may be, the lecturer must discuss it conscientiously, in light of Christ's own teachings and character; and so awaken the consciences of his listeners, making their moral sense more acute.

4. *Man's Body-Nature.*—Fourthly, man's body nature. For example: *Christian* precepts concerning environment; heredity; health; cleanliness; temperance; self-control; athletics; public hygiene; tenement-houses; prophylactics; the five senses; treatment of animals, etc.

In sum, the range of topics for this Lectureship in Christian Ethics should include whatever tends to society-building, or perfectation of personal character in Christ. Surely here is material enough, and this without any need of duplication, for centuries to come.

III. Spirit of the Lectureship

Thirdly, the Spirit of this Lectureship. Every lecture must be presented from the standpoint of Jesus Christ. It must be distinctly understood, and the founder of the Lectureship cannot emphasize the point too strongly, that every lecture in these successive courses must be unambiguously Christian; that is, from the viewpoint of the divine Son of Mary. This Lectureship must be something more than a lectureship in moral philosophy, or in church theology; it must be a lectureship in Christian morality, or practical ethics from the standpoint of Christ's own personal character, example, and teachings.

IV. Qualification of the Lecturer

Fourthly, the Qualification for the lecturer. The founder hopes that the lecturer may often be, perhaps generally, a layman; for instance: a

merchant, a banker, a lawyer, a statesman, a physician, a scientist, a professor, an artist, a craftsman; for Christian ethics is a matter of daily practical life rather than of metaphysical theology. The founder cares not what the ecclesiastical connection of the lecturer may be; whether a Baptist or an Episcopalian, a Quaker or a Latinist; for Christian ethics as Christ's behavior is not a matter of ecclesiastical ordination or of sect. The only pivotal condition of the Lectureship in this particular is this: The lecturer himself must be unconditionally loyal to our only King, our Lord Jesus Christ; for Jesus Christ himself is the world's true, everlasting Ethics.

The George Dana Boardman Lectureship in Christian Ethics

(Founded Anno Domini 1899)

Charles Foster Kent, Ph.D., was born August 13, 1867, and died May 3, 1925. After graduating at Yale University and serving in the Faculties of Chicago University and Brown University, he was called in 1901 to the Woolsey Professorship of Biblical Literature in Yale University, succeeding the distinguished protagonist of Biblical and Oriental education, Professor William R. Harper. Dr. Kent devoted himself to the dissemination of scholarly interest in the study of the Bible, as teacher, lecturer, writer and editor, possessing the rare power of giving the touch of his enthusiasm to his fellow workers, students and readers to an extraordinary degree. His interest was deeply religious as well as scientific, and he became the leader in the cause of Religious Education in Schools and Colleges.

The following lecture was his last public word, bravely delivered in ill health; and, as though prescient of the coming end, he made as its epilogue the noble Confession of Faith, which strikingly expresses the man and fittingly crowns his services to the world.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIANITY

I. The Quest for Fundamentals

EVERY man is at heart a fundamentalist. The quest for fundamentals is as natural as it is inevitable. Especially is it true at a time of political, social and religious upheaval.

Today we live in the midst of a period fraught with infinite perils and possibilities. Political organizations and ideals that have both fortified and handicapped us have been thrown into the discard. Long accepted social theories have suddenly been rejected, and new ones are being adopted. Many of the moral standards of our fathers are being set aside in theory, as well as in practice. The rising generation has no fear and little respect for elders. The elders, recognizing what a wreck they have made of civilization, question their own infallibility. Religious dogmas long regarded as the corner-stones of religion and the church are being disproved or supplanted by the discoveries of modern science. All theologies suddenly seem sadly out of date.

Meantime the brilliant discoveries of scientists are changing and expanding our entire conception of life, of man, and of the universe. The life processes, as well as the inorganic world, are found to be governed throughout by definite chemical and physical laws. The ardent advocate of the mechanistic theory goes further and proclaims that blind chance rules the universe. For the personal God of our childhood days he substitutes adaptation and the survival of the fittest. In the field of psychology the extreme behaviorists and psychoanalysts reduce human thought and consciousness to a series of mechanical reflexes which seem to the layman to hold out no hope to the mechanism known as man of personal immortality or belief in an over-ruling God.

It is not strange that the majority of the men and women in this war-shattered world are unhappy because they feel that the foundations beneath them are tottering. This feeling is not without reason. In reality the old foundations are not as solid as they had thought. Some seek to fortify them by frenzied legislation or by attacking all who question their stability. Others long to sink these foundations deeper and closer

to the bed-rock of reality. The latter would seem to be the only sane and safe method.

This relaying of foundations is the supreme task for the present age. Upon the spirit and thoroughness with which it is done, depends the future of the individual and of humanity. It calls for vision, breadth and poise. It can be done by no one group of men, however devoted or learned. It is a task for all mankind.

Where shall we find these foundations or the material out of which to build them?

Many are ready today to reject all religious and ethical teachings of the past and to find in the discoveries of science the foundations on which to build our faith and our new civilization. We already have a "Decalogue of Science." Years ago Herbert Spencer sought to formulate its gospel. Here is reality, so material that we can touch and weigh it. Here are facts that we must recognize, if our civilization is to survive. And yet will these physical facts alone furnish a foundation broad enough to support the superstructure which we desire to rear?

On the other hand millions still find in an authoritative Church and an infallible Pope these needed foundations. "Will these continue to

satisfy?" is a question which every thoughtful student of the modern drama of life involuntarily asks. Or shall we select seven or eight dogmas, long cherished by certain sections of the church, and declare that these alone are the fundamentals on which Christianity and the religion of today and tomorrow must stand? Shall we in so doing be justified in ignoring a majority of the principles underlying historic Christianity and the vital truths regarding life which modern science has laid bare? Deeper still is the question: Shall we build on dogmas formulated by mediaeval theologians or on facts and principles that already have been and still can be tested in the laboratory of human experience?

Beyond question the Bible contains many of the most vital laws of life. It also records certain of the most significant events of human history. It has proved the inspiration and the guide to countless millions in search for truth. In this age of many books it remains the supreme guide book in the way of life. Shall we, therefore, declare it inerrant, infallible in every statement, the unchanging foundation on which we can build, confident that no part will reveal limitations and imperfections due to human origin?

In so doing shall we accept the primitive and divergent traditions regarding the origin of man and the universe found in the opening chapters of Genesis as final and reject the testimony of that other authoritative chapter in divine Revelation clearly inscribed in the rocks? Shall we by interpreting those ancient oriental stories as scientific documents ignore their inestimable moral and religious values, which, like the parables of the New Testament, establish the supreme claim of the Bible to be "useful for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for religious instruction that the man of God may be complete and perfectly equipped for every good work?"

In our search for fundamentals shall not we who bear the title Christians, whatever be our inheritance or point of approach, go back to the teachings of the common Founder of our faith and there seek to find the basal truths which once fundamentally transformed a century strikingly similar to our own? Thither any quest for Christian fundamentals logically leads us. Therefore, let us lay aside every fear and the prejudices which so easily beset us, and honestly ask the question: "Does the Jesus of history meet our challenge?"

II. The Fundamentalism of Jesus

JESUS himself was in quest of fundamentals. His joy was obvious when he found that in the hour of misunderstanding and popular defection one disciple, Peter, was loyal and that, as his name suggested, he was a rock on which the Master Builder could found his beloved community.

Jesus was fully aware of the universal craving for fundamentals. The luminous description of the characteristics of the true sons of God, found in Matthew 5–7, known as the Sermon on the Mount, is his concrete answer to this challenge. Briefly he describes the happiness, special mission, moral standards, religious duties and chief dangers of those who would enter into their divine heritage and find real joy and satisfaction. At the end of this summary of his teachings he significantly declares: "He who hears these words of mine and acts upon them will be like a wise man who built his house upon a rock; the rain fell, the floods came, the wind blew and beat upon the house; but it did not fall, for its foundation was on a rock."

Here we have one of the clearest revelations of Jesus' purpose. His words also imply that he himself felt that he was presenting a philosophy of life, so broad that every man could, with absolute assurance, make it the foundation for his daily living, as well as thinking; so vital that no man could safely neglect to build upon it.

Jesus stated very clearly that he did not come to set aside the earlier teachings of the Jewish law-givers and prophets. "I did not come to set them aside but to bring them to completion."

They had sought by rule, precept and exhortation to lay down definite laws to govern each man's action in all possible situations. This approach to the problems of life was necessarily imperfect and unsatisfactory. Jesus aimed at completeness. He therefore set forth universal principles. Usually he presented the data upon which they are based; then he left his hearers to draw their own conclusions. To make clear these data, he often used short stories or parables, which reflected the common facts of experience. These parables were eminently fitted to set forth not rules but principles. For example, if the much misunderstood parable of "The Unjust Steward," who seeing that he would be dis-

charged, cancelled the debts due his Master, that out of gratitude they might receive this tricky servant into their home, be interpreted legalistically and literally, it would teach dishonest use of another man's property. The principle, however, of larger foresight in the use of one's personal property, which this parable dramatically sets forth, is one of the most important and revolutionary ever laid before the economic world.

Mark intimates that, in teaching the people, Jesus always used parables or short stories. The statement reveals his patient zeal in holding up before them their problems and in helping them to arrive at definite conclusions. Only after they themselves had drawn the natural inductions did he at times formulate the principles.

Jesus' occasional direct statements of principles are masterpieces of simplicity and clarity. Some times they are paradoxical, as for example, "he who loses his life shall find it." They are always thought and act-provoking; but they are never to be interpreted as arbitrary rules. They are simply principles to be applied by each individual in the light of his own knowledge, experience and circumstance. They are, therefore, applicable in every age and situation.

Parable and direct statement are effective; but Jesus used a still more dramatic way to set forth his fundamentals: he demonstrated them in his own life and in that of his loyal followers. Through the vivid gospel narratives we can still see these principles in operation and judge them by their fruits.

Jesus was the most modern of ancient thinkers, the most western of eastern teachers, the practical scientist who used the scientific method centuries before it was definitely formulated or its epoch-making results achieved.

The scientific method is the opposite of the dogmatic. It begins not with assumptions, but with a study of facts. It accepts as final only well established and cumulative testimony. On this broad basis it builds hypotheses. When these are confirmed by multiple experiments, they are accepted as working principles.

The Jewish wise men, who have given us the Book of Proverbs, based their teachings on keen observation and wide experience. The recognized teachers of Jesus' day and race, however, had largely abandoned this scientific method. They depended rather upon the authority of the past and of certain famous rabbis. As a result,

they no longer spoke with authority of personal knowledge and conviction.

Jesus adopted the more scientific methods of the earlier Jewish wise men. Speaking of his own work, he declared: "Wisdom is known by what it achieves." He not only built squarely on facts and reality, but also taught his disciples to do the same. The suggestive formula, "Have you not seen or have you not heard?" echoes throughout his teachings. Even in discussing the deepest philosophical questions, he begins by asking his hearers to consider familiar natural phenomena, such as the life of the wild birds and the growth and beauty of the lilies. "Now," he continues, with his simple, direct logic, "if God so clothes the grass of the field which is alive today, but tomorrow is thrown into the oven, is it not far more certain that he will clothe you, O men of little faith?" "The common people heard him gladly because they recognized at once the ringing note of authority, based on personal experience and on a close and sympathetic observation of life.

Does Jesus after nineteen centuries still command the same popular following? Have the discoveries in the field of pure science, politics,

economics, and psychology disproved or confirmed the accuracy of his inductions? Are there common fundamentals upon which the modern scientists and the fearless followers of the Founder of Christianity can in this transitional twentieth century build their faith and life?

III. Jesus' Fundamentals

JESUS' teachings are so many-sided that it is impossible to do justice to them all in a few brief statements. Any selection of his fundamental principles will necessarily be influenced by the point of view of the one making it. Great care must also be taken not to read our modern ideas into the gospel records; and yet many of his most important principles are implied by his words and acts rather than directly stated. Even in the face of these difficulties the widespread demand for Christian fundamentals would seem to justify the attempt to group and formulate certain of his basic principles.

For a growing majority of men today, the language of theology is either obsolete or objectionable. Living as we do in a scientific age, we are under obligations to use the language which men understand. At the same time, technical scientific terms should be avoided as far as possible. Although it is obviously impossible to attain the clarity and simplicity of Jesus' original statements, these should be the ideal in any modern paraphrase.

To those familiar with the creeds and formulas of the Christian churches a plain statement of Jesus' basic teachings seems almost unorthodox, for their emphasis is on life rather than on creed. But to all who face squarely the discoveries and problems of the twentieth century, it brings deep satisfaction. Also we soon discover that Jesus was not seeking to set forth a system of Christian ethics. He was principally concerned with men's personal relation to God. Morals were essential to the establishment of that relation, for, as he said, only the clean-minded can see God; but ethics are only a corollary to the religion of Jesus.

A brilliant teacher of religion has recently remarked, "If God be included in the friendly circle, social ethics become religion." Jesus would have reversed the statement: Social ethics are the necessary prerequisites and the inevitable results of seeing God.

Hence, in keeping with the Boardman lectureship, we are endeavoring, not only to study the ethics of Jesus but also the foundations on which they rest and the motive power that inspires them.

Among the many facts and principles which Jesus set forth, we of the present age may perhaps put first his statement of the great principle of

progressive growth of unfolding of life. Jesus recognized the working of this principle in the physical world, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." He uses this illustration to make clear the similar development in the spiritual realm: "God's rule is like a man who sows seed in the ground and sleeps by night and rises by day, while the seed sprouts and comes up without his knowing it."

Modern scientists are beginning to make very clear to us that upward thrust of life which begins with the smallest one-celled organism. It adapts itself marvelously to an ever-changing environment. Even the most insuperable obstacles or calamities cannot permanently stay its progress. All the forces of the chemical and physical world are enlisted, until after millions of years life appears on earth incarnate in man. The tiny blade has developed into the ear and begins to give promise of "the full grain in the ear."

It was perhaps inevitable that, in discovering the chemical and physical processes that characterize this development and in tracing life back almost to its beginning, many scientists should feel that in the fortuitous combinations of blind matter they had found the very source of life

itself. Deeper knowledge and broader vision are correcting this mistake. Today many of the leading scientists of the Anglo-Saxon world recognize that the type of purely mechanistic interpretation which finds blind chance ruling life and the universe, satisfies neither the facts nor the reason. Representative of the new trend is the statement, drawn up by twenty-five prominent Americans, including fifteen eminent scientists: "It is a sublime conception of God which is furnished by science, and one wholly consonant with the highest ideals of religion, when it represents Him as revealing Himself through the inbreathing of life into its constituent matter, culminating in man with his spiritual nature and all his Godlike powers."

No one would for a moment claim that Jesus anticipated the discoveries of scientists in the field of nature. He did, however, perceive the great principle of progressive growth of which the detailed discoveries are but the signal confirmation. Jesus was interested in man's higher moral and spiritual evolution. Where the work of the modern specialist in science ends, that of the great spiritual Specialist begins. The broad principle that they have in common may be

formulated as follows: The law of life and of the universe is that the higher forms gradually develop from the lower in accord with a definite purpose.

In describing the supreme Spirit in the universe, Jesus was far more eager to picture the character of God than he was to define him; more desirous of bringing men into intimate touch with him than to give them a perfect creed. In the gospel records he makes only three brief statements regarding God: "God is one God. God is spirit. God alone is good."

The old anthropomorphic, nationalistic God of his race completely disappears from the picture. Even the distinctive Jewish name for the deity, Jehovah or Yahweh, also vanishes. Instead, Jesus addresses God as "Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth." These two titles well describe the two characteristics of God which Jesus stresses. The one is that which scientists discover in the changeless laws and intricate mechanism of the physical world. It is a God whom Jesus declared sends his rain upon the good and evil alike. It is that quality in God which he, like the scientist, saw revealed in the processes of nature and in the unchanging laws which govern life. It is that aspect of the divine rule which gives to man

his large freedom of choice and corresponding responsibilities. Jesus proclaimed this principle most clearly in the parable of the servants to whom were intrusted certain talents. Each was absolutely free to use them as he wished; but for their use he was held inexorably responsible. Here is an aspect of Jesus' teachings regarding God which is often overlooked; but it is as clear as it is true to experience.

The other characteristic of the great Reality which Jesus stressed is set forth with equal clarity in the stories of "The Lost Sheep," "The Lost Coin," and the matchless parable of "The Prodigal Son." In the last, the two aspects of the divine character are blended. The Prodigal is granted far greater liberty than would be given him by a human father. He is left absolutely free to learn his lesson in the stern school of experience. Yet when he has found himself and turns in his hour of utter need and extremity to his divine Father, he is met with love and with a response to which even the word "Father" cannot do full justice.

Again the picture is absolutely true to man's deepest experience. Whenever a human being reaches the limits of his own resources and turns

to the infinite Source of strength, it is never in vain. Jesus' leading teachings regarding God may, therefore, be briefly stated in modern terms: The one supreme Reality in the universe is spirit, just and altogether good, giving to man full freedom and responsibility, yet never failing him in his time of need.

Equally central in Jesus' philosophy of life was his teaching regarding man's worth and capacity. In asserting this principle Jesus took issue with the social standards of his age and with the religious leaders of his race. The Pharisees condemned him because he reached out a helping hand and healed the sick on the Sabbath day. In common with the ancient world they valued institutions, such as the Sabbath, far higher than they did the individual. In their laws they guarded the life of a sheep more than they did that of man. Against all this obtuseness regarding relative values Jesus protested, "Is not man worth more than a sheep?" In man he saw the culmination of the creative process. To his humble followers he declared, "In the sight of God, you are of more worth than many sparrows." Of the poor and lowly he said, "It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

In his day, as today, there was a vast amount of human refuse, rejected by the church and by society. In the outlawed tax-gatherers and the fallen women of the street Jesus saw infinite possibilities of moral and spiritual growth. In many cases he signally demonstrated these possibilities.

What Jesus recognized intuitively and through experience, science is discovering anew. Man stands intellectually far above all other animals; but it is in his moral and spiritual life that he has the greatest capacity for future development. Like the Infinite, he has consciousness and personality. He is rapidly becoming the master of his physical environment. With the aid of memory and imagination he is able to live in the past, present and future. He has vast resources of love and loyalty. He is in a very true and unique sense a son of God. Therefore, in the light of scientific discovery, as well as of the teachings of Jesus, we may accept as a fundamental fact: Man is of far greater worth than all else on earth, for he is the culmination of the creative process and has the capacity for unlimited moral and spiritual development.

Closely related to the preceding, is the principle of completeness implicit in Jesus' command, "Be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Each new discovery of science reveals this urge toward completeness. It is one of the universal laws of nature. It governs the life of every organism. Every instinct within us cries for full expression. Our dreams by day and night reveal this inner urge.

Jesus recognized this urge in the moral, as well as in the physical world. In the Old Testament scriptures he saw a record of its outworkings in the life of his race. He never made the mistake of declaring those scriptures or the moral standards that they set forth inerrant.

Instead he frankly pointed out their incompleteness. Repeatedly he said, "Moses said to you . . . but I say to you." The old laws regarding divorce he set aside as outgrown. He declared that his task was to bring them to completeness.

Jesus taught that the chief aim in the life of each individual is not self-renunciation but self-realization. To certain men, as for example, the rich young man, who came with the selfish question, "How can I inherit eternal life?" he pointed out the necessity of self-denial. Handicapped as the youth was by wealth, he must be freed before he could develop normally. Jesus told many a man to take up his cross and follow him; but

cross-bearing was not an end in itself. "I came that men might have life and that more abundantly," that is "live life to the full."

This full, rounded life, he pointed out, could come only through the integration of the whole self. "If a household is divided against itself, that household cannot stand" is a far-reaching statement. "The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore if your eye is single, your whole body will be full of light . . . No man can serve two masters: either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will be loyal to one and despise the other."

This principle may be expressed in the terms of psychology: "In a fully recognized self there will be no conflict of purpose, no complexes, no repression, but the harmonious expression of all the vital forces toward a common purpose and end."

Jesus also pointed out the value of man's complete adaptation to his social and spiritual environment. At the beginning of his summary of his teachings found in Matthew 5, we read: "Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the rule of God."

The "poor in spirit" are those who feel the need and desire for the higher spiritual life.

They are receptive, eager to live in accord with the divine rule. Hence, according to the law that those who seek find, that divine leadership is theirs.

They who mourn are those who learn from experience, not only that sorrow, if rightly borne, establishes closest relations to God and to one's fellow men, but that a divine discontent with what is imperfect is the spur inciting to achievements which in the end bring lasting comfort.

The modest are those who have conquered their childish pride and greed and are intent simply in performing each task well. As their inherited right, the best that earth can give, honor, gratitude and serenity, come to them in richest measure.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are impelled by an intense desire ever to think and feel and act aright. No painful regrets destroy their happiness. No barriers of their own making separate them from their fellow men or from their divine Friend.

The merciful are those whose love and sympathy go out toward all mankind and especially to those who need most their friendship. Thus they create, wherever they go, a kindly atmosphere in which unhappiness cannot flourish.

The clean-minded are those who let no prejudice or vile thought or feeling becloud their spiritual vision. They, therefore, are able to see God at every turn, in the beauty of the landscape, in the wonders of the universe, in the eyes of those who love them, in the secret chambers of their own soul, so that they ever live in his presence.

The peacemakers are the constructive workmen, the creators of harmony in the home, the school, in the business, and the professional world, who know the joy of the Creator himself. Rightly are they called the sons of God, for they are working with him in creating a world of beauty, harmony and happiness.

Into these Beatitudes Jesus put his own wealth of experience. He reveals that practical mysticism which is the foundation of his religion. It is difficult to formulate in modern terms this all-embracing principle of spiritual adaptation. The central idea is: Quite apart from rank or wealth or circumstance, genuine and lasting happiness inevitably comes to those who are intent on establishing right spiritual relations with God and with their fellow men.

If man is to find complete happiness and self-

realization, he must be perfectly adjusted to the Source of the spiritual life. The initiative lies with each individual. The principle of highest loyalty is set forth by Jesus in two comprehensive statements: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength," and "Seek first the rule of God and his righteousness."

The phrase commonly translated, "Kingdom of God," in our current versions of the Bible does not mean a dominance arbitrarily imposed upon man, but a rule voluntarily accepted by him. As Jesus declared, it is not something that can be seen objectively, but is within the minds of men. It is the divine will emerging into consciousness in the individual. It also includes the physical, moral, and spiritual laws and forces which make possible the realization of the divine purpose in the universe. Coöperation with these laws and forces means the attainment of all the good that life has to give.

The principle underlying these teachings may be thus expressed: Man's supreme privilege is to love his divine Father whole-heartedly and to know and live in accord with his divine rule. Then all the forces of the universe will coöperate with him, for he is co-operating with them.

In the adjustment of each individual to the divine rule, Jesus fully appreciated the practical value of prayer. The principle underlying his teachings on this subject goes down to the very roots of life:

> Ask and you shall receive,
> Seek and you will find,
> Knock and it will be opened to you;
>
> For he who asks, receives,
> He who seeks, finds,
> And to him who knocks, it is opened.

This little poem in two stanzas, with its perfect parallelism of thought, has always seemed to me to be a marching song. It starts with simply a request. Then the petitioner sets out in search of what he desires. In the third line he is knocking at the door. In the last line we, in imagination, see the door opening in response to his earnest endeavor. Instinctively we feel the same intense desire and persistency that is stressed in Jesus' story of the importunate widow who gave the judge no rest until her petition was granted.

While Jesus taught that everything for which a man thus asked will be granted, he made it clear that infinite love and reason determine the form

of the answer. The Giver knows how to give good gifts to his children. "If man asks for a loaf, he will not give him a stone." If he asks for a stone, what is best for him will be given. Often he receives a stone, for only as he sees the futility of trying to subsist on stones, can he learn the value of wholesome food. In response to his request, the Prodigal received a diet of husks. On that diet he came to himself, and so found his Father.

Prayer in the thought of Jesus is the outreach of the individual soul toward its spiritual environment and the response of that environment to the individual. To make that outreach complete every impediment, such as doubt and hatred, must be cleared away. Then prayer becomes an invincible force. "Therefore, I say to you, believe that whatsoever you ask for in prayer you have received and it shall be yours. And whenever you stand up to pray, if you have a grievance against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your wrong doings."

Prayer, as interpreted by Jesus, is in no sense incompatible with the discoveries of modern science. The lowest organism is ever reaching out toward its environment in quest for that

which will supply its needs. Even in the atom, the positive electrons revolve about and are held in balance by the negative nucleus. The more highly developed forms of plant and animal life turn instinctively to those of the other sex. In man the nobler parental impulses develop into friendship of spirit with spirit and lead up to the communion of the spirit of man with the eternal Spirit.

Adjustment of the highly complicated organism known as man to his spiritual environment is further paralleled by that remarkable adjustment of the physical environment to the needs of the animal organism which Professor Henderson of Harvard has pointed out in his recent volumes. As the dramatic story of "The Lost Sheep" proclaims: God ever seeks those who need or seek his help.

Thus science begins to reveal the broad foundations on which rest Jesus' bold assertions regarding prayer: Direct communion between the spirit of man and the spirit of God is not only possible but every sincere, clearly defined, and persistent desire is a potent force in the universe and is realized in ways best adapted to the needs of each petitioner.

After centuries of discussions regarding the origin of evil and the nature of sin, we are at last beginning in the light of modern psychology to understand Jesus' teachings on these subjects. The Jews of his day believed that most of the evils of life came from the influence of a personal devil and his demoniacal emissaries.

In a conversation with the Pharisees regarding ceremonial washing, Jesus laid down the great principle that it is not from without, but that from "within, from the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual vice, acts of theft, murder, adultery, greed" and the other vices.

Today we recognize that men go wrong because they follow the immediate promptings of those impulses of fear or anger or greed or sex, which they, in common with the animals, inherit from innumerable earlier ancestors. All these impulses come from within. Yielding is wrong, because in so doing men disregard the higher moral and spiritual impulses implanted within them.

Thus in word and practice Jesus also anticipated another fact which science has clearly demonstrated, but which society is still slow to accept: Evil cannot be overcome by evil but simply by good.

Jesus' method of dealing with evil was always positive. The only exception was when he scourged the representatives of the grafting high priests from the Temple and pointed out to the Pharisees the folly of their hypocritical methods. In these two instances he only revealed but did not cure the moral maladies. For the tax-gatherers and the public prostitutes he had no words of denunciation. Instead he befriended and believed in them. Like Levi and Zaccheus, they responded to his revolutionary methods. Hate and injustice he cured by love, never by curses and blows. For the negations of the older law, he substituted positive statements. Men forgot their old malign habits, because he implanted constructive ideas and ideals in their minds. Also he set them at positive tasks.

Jesus recognized intuitively what the modern psychologist has definitely formulated: Men can be delivered from the power of these inherited impulses of anger and sex and fear, not by crushing but by redirecting them toward higher ends. They are the major motive powers in man. Sublimated they make the beast, Godlike. To enable his followers to redirect their instinctive fears, Jesus taught: "Have no fear of those who kill

the body but cannot kill the soul. Fear rather him who can destroy body and soul in hell." Out of the instinctive fear of men he sought to develop reverence for God.

Psychology makes clear the meaning of the striking paradox: "He who finds his life shall lose it; he who loses his life shall find it." Life to many men is a satisfaction of their inherited impulses, such as greed, self-assertion, and sex. If they follow these, they fail to attain the higher spiritual life. If they refuse to be ruled by these and are responsive to the higher ideals of service, self-sacrifice, and chivalry, they find the more abundant spiritual life.

Jesus declared that one of his chief aims was to help men to know the truth that the truth might make them free. In his clinics he constantly demonstrated the potency of knowledge and truth in freeing men. To the fear-beset, the neurotics, those suffering from functional paralysis and various repressions, he brought a message of truth that enabled them to break the bonds of their wrong habits and resolve their complexes. He never claimed that his miracles were supernatural acts. Most of them appear to have been the result of freeing men from their own baneful repressions.

Jesus also intuitively recognized that character is the product of cumulative acts, that it is developed under the influence of dominant motives and sentiments, but that it is in the final analysis, the result, not of professions, but of definite achievements. "By their deeds shall you know men." Not those who say, "Lord, Lord," and claim discipleship, but those who have given the cup of cold water to the needy attain the rounded character. It was not the son who said he would go, but the son who went that arrived.

In dealing with men's social relations Jesus also reached conclusions which the social sciences are simply confirming. The Golden Rule is more than a rule; it is a universal principle. It postulates the fact that in the final analysis the interests of each individual and of society are identical. It is the one universal principle that promises to solve the problems of human relations, domestic, industrial, social, and international. It has no bounds of race or place. It calls for absolute equality of treatment of all, including ourselves. It is the ultimate expression of democracy: Each man is under obligation to use his intelligence and best efforts to promote the interest of everyone with whom he comes into contact.

Into the turbulent economic world Jesus carried the same uncompromising democracy. He laid down the broad principle: Wealth is a merciless master, but, if used to serve mankind, may be made to yield rich returns, both here and in the life beyond.

In the story of the vineyard keeper, who was horror-struck to find able men standing idle in the market-place, because they had no job, Jesus proclaims a principle that the advanced leaders in industry are just beginning to accept: Society is under obligation to give to every man, who is willing to work, an opportunity to earn a living wage.

In the family Jesus saw the foundation and pattern of all stable society. The beloved community which he established was but an extension of the loyal family relations. Hence the importance of safeguarding marriage and parenthood: "Whom God has joined together let no man put asunder." Rejecting the lax divorce laws of his race, he laid down the rule: "Whenever marriage has been divinely cemented by parenthood, let not society sever this bond, and whoever, in order to marry, divorces his wife, is guilty of adultery."

Certainly our lax divorce practices have not demonstrated the injustice of this strict ruling. Christendom has not yet seriously tested the validity of the principle here laid down by Jesus, for it is only one part of his philosophy of life.

Science has no definite answer to the question: "What is the goal of the upward urge of life?" Is the development of the species to go ever on until perfection is attained, only to vanish with a dying world? Even a perfect society on earth does not satisfy the divine economy, for it cannot be permanent.

Jesus had a clear-cut answer: Life here on earth is a training school for the individual who lives on unendingly.

Jesus and the majority of the Jews of his day believed so firmly in life after death that he spent little time discussing it. He assumed it. His reply to the question of his disciples about the future life indicates his attitude: "In my Father's house are many dwellings; if it were not so, I would have told you so."

During the last week at Jerusalem, the conservative Sadducees, who held to the ancient belief that man dies like the beast and that is the end of him, tried to entrap Jesus by a captious ques-

tion. They told of a woman who in succession married six brothers and at last died herself. "When they rise from the dead, whose wife shall she be?"

The question was intended not only to entrap Jesus, but also to make ridiculous the Pharisaic belief in the resurrection of the body. It was one of those opportunities which the great Teacher was quick to improve.

Turning to the Pharisees he said: "When people rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are married, but are like the angels in heaven." Then taking up the implied challenge of the Sadducees, he said; "But in regard to the resurrection of the dead, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!' He is the God not of the dead, but of the living. You are greatly in error."

Jesus' meaning is clear: God is the God, not of those who have ceased to exist, but of those who, like the patriarchs, are ever living. The realm of the God of the spirit is not bounded by the physical world, nor his power and loving care for his children to their life on this earth. It is only

the physical body that perishes. That which is spiritual is as eternal as God himself.

Jesus' intimations regarding the nature of life after death are probably the basis of Paul's hymn of immortality in I Corinthians 15. The angels, in Jewish thought, had definite spiritual bodies, not the houses of clay in which men on earth abide. Jesus implies that "Corruption cannot inherit incorruption."

The far-reaching principle set forth in these passages underlies all his philosophy: The life and development of man go on unendingly after death, and to each individual is given an habitat adapted to his changing environment.

Even here the scientist recognizes but the extension of laws already familiar to the student of the physical organism.

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IV. A Confession of Faith

MAY I conclude with a brief summary of the thirteen principles which are to me the foundations of a working philosophy of life? May I also put them in the form of a personal confession of faith?

I believe that growth toward completeness and perfection is the great law of the universe and that the higher forms of life gradually develop from the lower. Life, therefore, means continuous progress.

I believe that one intelligent, just, and divine Spirit, Lord of Heaven and Earth, is perfecting his good purpose through chemical, physical, moral, and spiritual laws and forces, and that he is revealing himself through that upward thrust of life which culminates in man.

I believe in the infinite worth of each individual, and in his capacity for complete moral and spiritual development, and that the Supreme Spirit of the universe gives him full freedom and responsibility and, like a loving father, has made ample provision for his every need.

I believe that here and now in this life man is intended to attain perfect happiness, and that the full, harmonious development of all his physical, moral and spiritual powers is possible, if he will but use the knowledge and ability at his command.

I believe that man's supreme privilege is to love his divine Father whole-heartedly and to know and live in accord with his rule, as revealed in the laws of nature and in the lives of men, and that then all the forces of the universe will coöperate with him, for he is coöperating with them.

I believe that direct communion with the spirit of man and the spirit of God is wholly possible and that every sincere, clearly defined, and persistent desire is a potent force and is realized in ways best adapted to the needs of each petitioner.

I believe that the evil tendencies which lead men astray, come from within and are due to the impulses, such as fear, anger, hunger, and sex-desire, inherited from innumerable ancestors, and that they can be overcome not by crushing them, but by redirecting them toward higher ends. They are indeed the motive power within man. Rightly directed, they make him Godlike.

I believe that Jesus by his words and work

reveals the divine character and purpose toward man. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, showing men how to break the bondage of their ignorance, of their inherited impulses, and of the effects of their wrong deeds, and to attain that full moral and spiritual growth, which is to find life, and that more abundantly.

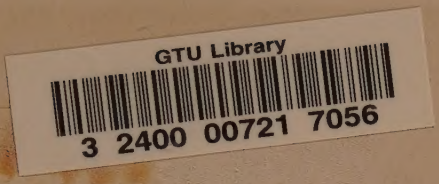
I believe that each man is under obligation to use his intelligence and best efforts to promote the interests of everyone with whom he comes into contact, even as he does his own, and that this principle is the only solvent of the problems of human relations, domestic, industrial, social, and international.

I believe that wealth is a merciless master but if used to serve mankind, may be made to yield rich returns, both here and in the life beyond.

I believe that society is under obligation to give to every man who is willing to work, an opportunity to earn a living wage and to experience the joy of doing constructive work that will give him a consciousness of his divine sonship.

I believe that the family is the foundation and the pattern of all stable society, that marriage is the foundation of the family, and that not lax divorce laws, but truer marital love and loyalty are essential to the life and welfare of humanity.

I believe that the life and development of man goes on unendingly beyond death, and that each individual is given an habitat adapted to his new environment. The goal of ever-developing life, which we know here, is therefore, the perfection of the spiritual life of each individual.



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